

CLAIMS

What we claim is:

1. A purified and isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding a transferrin receptor protein of a strain of *Moraxella* or a fragment or an analog of the transferrin receptor protein.
2. The nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 wherein the transferrin receptor protein is the transferrin receptor binding protein 1 (Tbp1) of the *Moraxella* strain.
3. The nucleic acid molecule of claim 2 wherein the transferrin receptor protein is the transferrin receptor binding protein 2 (Tbp2) of the *Moraxella* strain.
4. The nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 wherein the strain of *Moraxella* is a strain of *Moraxella catarrhalis*.
5. The nucleic acid molecule of claim 4 wherein the strain of *Moraxella catarrhalis* is *Moraxella catarrhalis* 4223, Q8 or R1.
6. A purified and isolated nucleic acid molecule having a DNA sequence selected from the group consisting of:
  - (a) a DNA sequence as set out in Figure 5, 6, 10, 11 or 27 (SEQ ID Nos: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 45 or 46) or the complementary DNA sequence thereto;
  - (b) a DNA sequence encoding an amino acid sequence as set out in Figure 5, 6, 10, 11 or 27 (SEQ ID Nos: 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 or 47) or the complementary DNA sequence thereto; and
  - (c) a DNA sequence which hybridizes under stringent conditions to any one of the DNA sequences defined in (a) or (b).
7. The nucleic acid molecule of claim 6, wherein the DNA sequence defined in (c) has at least about 90% sequence identity with any one of the DNA sequences

defined in (a) or (b).

8. The nucleic acid molecule of claim 6 wherein the DNA sequence defined in (c) is that encoding the equivalent transferrin receptor protein from another strain of *Moraxella*.

9. A vector adapted for transformation of a host comprising the nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 or 6.

10. The vector of claim 9 encoding a fragment of a transferrin receptor protein and having the characteristics of a plasmid selected from the group consisting of pLEM3, pLEM25, pLEM23, DS-1698-1-1, DS-1754-1, pSLRD2, pSLRD3, pSLRD4 and pSLRD5.

11. The vector of claim 9 further comprising expression means operatively coupled to the nucleic acid molecule for expression by the host of said transferrin receptor protein of a strain of *Moraxella* or the fragment or the analog of the transferrin receptor protein.

12. The vector of claim 11 having the characteristics of plasmid pLEM-29, pLEM-33, pLEM-37, SLRD35-A and SLRD35-B.

13. A transformed host containing an expression vector as claimed in claim 11.

14. A method of forming a substantially pure recombinant transferrin receptor protein of a strain of *Moraxella*, which comprises:

growing the transformed host of claim 13 to express a transferrin receptor protein as inclusion bodies,

purifying the inclusion bodies free from cellular material and soluble proteins,

solubilizing transferrin receptor protein from the purified inclusion bodies, and

purifying the transferrin receptor protein free

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from other solubilized materials.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein said transferrin receptor protein comprises Tbp1 alone, Tbp2 alone or a mixture of Tbp1 and Tbp2.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein said transferrin receptor protein is at least about 70% pure.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein said transferrin receptor protein is at least about 90% pure.

18. A recombinant transferrin receptor protein or fragment or analog thereof producible by the transformed host of claim 12.

19. The protein of claim 18 which is transferrin receptor binding protein 1 (Tbp1) of the *Moraxella* strain devoid of other proteins of the *Moraxella* strain.

20. The protein of claim 18 which is transferrin receptor binding protein 2 (Tbp2) of the *Moraxella* strain devoid of other proteins of the *Moraxella* strain.

21. The protein of claim 18 wherein the strain of *Moraxella* is a strain of *Moraxella catarrhalis*.

22. An immunogenic composition, comprising at least one active component selected from the group consisting of:

(A) a purified and isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding a transferrin receptor protein of a strain of *Moraxella* or a fragment or an analog of the transferrin receptor protein;

(B) a purified and isolated nucleic acid molecule having a DNA sequence selected from the group consisting of:

(a) a DNA sequence as set out in Figure 5, 6, 10, 11 or 27 (SEQ ID Nos: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 45 or 46) or the complementary DNA sequence thereto;

(b) a DNA sequence encoding an amino acid sequence as set out in Figure 5, 6, 10, 11 or 27 (SEQ ID Nos: 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 or 47) or the complementary DNA sequence thereto; and

(c) a DNA sequence which hybridizes under stringent conditions to any one of the DNA sequences defined in (a) or (b); or

(C) a recombinant transferrin receptor protein or fragment or analog thereof producible by a transformed host containing an expression vector comprising a nucleic acid molecule as defined in (A) or (B) and expression means operatively coupled to the nucleic acid molecule for expression by the host of the recombinant transferrin receptor protein or fragment or analog thereof;

and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier therefor, said at least one active component producing an immune response when administered to a host.

23. A method for generating an immune response in a host, comprising administering to the host an immunoeffective amount of the immunogenic composition of claim 22.

24. A method of determining the presence, in a sample, of nucleic acid encoding a transferrin receptor protein of a strain of *Moraxella*, comprising the steps of:

(a) contacting the sample with the nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 or 6 to produce duplexes comprising the nucleic acid molecule and any said nucleic acid molecule encoding the transferrin receptor protein of a strain of *Moraxella* present in the sample and specifically hybridizable therewith; and

(b) determining production of the duplexes.

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25. A diagnostic kit for determining the presence, in a sample, of nucleic acid encoding a transferrin receptor protein of a strain of *Moraxella*, comprising:

(a) the nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 or 6;

(b) means for contacting the nucleic acid molecule with the sample to produce duplexes comprising the nucleic acid molecule and any said nucleic acid present in the sample and hybridizable with the nucleic acid molecule; and

(c) means for determining production of the duplexes.

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